



info•bits

City of Torrance

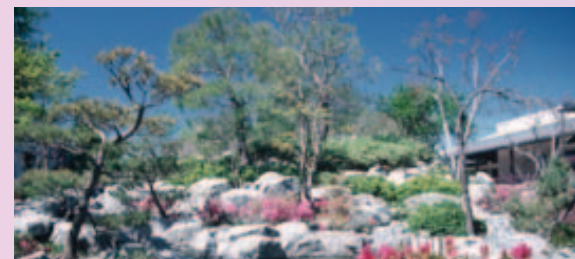
summer • 2013

Behind the Scenes at the Cultural Arts Center



General Services and Cultural Services divisions team up to manage and run the Torrance Cultural Arts Center. General Services functions as the landlord for the entire property, Cultural Services run the visual arts, performing arts and exercise classes and the Torrance Art Museum. “We know we’ve done a good job when patrons of the Center have a successful event, and leave wanting to return,” said Shant Megerdichian, Facilities Operations Manager. “Torrance has more programs and exceptional facilities than most other cities,” said Eve Rappoport, Cultural Services Division Manager. “Our staff does an amazing job providing quality instructors and a weekly schedule of classes for people of all ages.”

The Torrance Cultural Arts Center boasts two theaters, four meeting/event rooms, two plazas, a Japanese garden with two waterfalls and a large koi pond, five visual arts studios, four dance studios, seven storage areas and an Art Museum! TerriAnn Ferren is the Public Relations/Marketing & Advertising Manager for the Center. “We have a gem of a complex here that is second to none and we offer reasonable rentals with great customer service,” she said. “People are amazed when they see the Pine Wind Japanese Garden, a popular spot for wedding photos.”



General Services Team - (Front Row) Dyna Kaemerle, Jean Jordan, Elizabeth Coral, Nina Schroeder, Scott Villalva (Back row) Lisa Morales, Shant Megerdichian, TerriAnn Ferren, Jordan Rumery, Chris Adame



Operations Attendants, Justin Masuyama, Mark Jonas, Richard Lau and Sean Mochidome take a moment on a busy Saturday at the Center

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Behind the Scenes at the Cultural Arts Center

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Facility Operations Chief, Scott Villalva, runs a staff of 18 part-time Facility Operations Attendants who are trained in every aspect of the set-up for various events in the center. Robert Krizo is the night Facility Operations Chief. An event manager is assigned to be present throughout most events to ensure that everything runs smoothly for the client. Two staff members are assigned for every four hour rental and can provide maintenance, coffee service, set-up and help with any special needs the client may require. Scott's crew also provides equipment, set-up and staffing for offsite events in the city like the Armed Forces Day Parade, dedications, ribbon cuttings, groundbreakings and the like.

The most unusual event in the Center "was at an Indian wedding, the groom arrived on horseback. He rode up the ramp and to the door of the Toyota Meeting Room, they had a guy walking behind the horse with a broom and a shovel, just in case!" said Villalva, "We were really glad the client couldn't locate the traditional elephant".

Lisa Morales is one of two Booking Managers and handles all facilities at the Center (except the Armstrong Theater) and the meeting rooms in the West Annex and main library and council chambers. Customer Service Representative, Chris Adame and Assistant Booking Manager, Elizabeth Coral attends to the details. "The entire staff in the center is like family, procedures are structured to be user friendly and to run smoothly," said Morales. It takes a lot of good communication between us to keep track of changes, handle inquiries, give tours and keep up with the long list of logistics associated with the 1000 or so events that go on at the center every year.

YES! Torrance has an Art Museum featuring international artists in educationally directed, theme based exhibits – Coming Soon – Science Fiction!

Max Presneill is the Torrance Art Museum's (TAM) curator and a working artist. His job is to coordinate, install, remove, promote and organize about 6 themed exhibits a year in the "near perfect space" that consists of large and small exhibit rooms, a dedicated video room, office, a conference room and kitchen. The staff works closely with the curator on developing and implementing exhibitions and programs at TAM. Volunteers greet the public at the reception desk Tuesday through Saturday, 11am to 5pm.



(l-r) Jason Ramos, Max Presneill, Lisa Desmidt, Megan Flanders, Michelle Cho



Box Office Manager, Dyna Kaemerle and any two members of the part-time staff of six can be found in the Armstrong Theater Box Office Monday through Friday from 10am to 8pm and Saturday, 12pm to 4pm and two hours before and one hour after each performance. "It's amazing how many local residents have no idea that this theater is here or they think it is a movie theater," said Kaemerle.



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City Recognized for Rideshare Program

The City of Torrance Rideshare Program received a 2013 Diamond Award recognizing its outstanding efforts to bring relief to the region's congested streets. The annual award distinguishes significant achievements of corporate rideshare programs in Los Angeles County and their contribution toward decreasing gasoline consumption, air pollution and commuter costs as well as improving mobility.



(Left to right) Carolyn Chun, Christee Scottini, Cyndy Rosell (recently promoted to Community Services Department), Kim Fuentes

City Employees Train to Protect the Ocean

750 employees have received training so far in sessions led by Leslie Cortez, the City's Senior Administrative Analyst in charge of NPDES - National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. The federal mandate to prohibit pollutants from entering the storm drain system was created to protect the oceans from contaminated water runoff that flows untreated through storm drains. Urban runoff is the largest source of pollution to Southern California's coastal waters often sickening beach goers and killing marine plants and animals.

"This program is so huge it's challenging to recap specific areas that are most critical to the success of the City's NPDES program, as there are so many," said Cortez who is planning additional sessions to reach every City employee. A number of departments within the City are charged with various aspects that affect pollution prevention. Community Development, Fire Department and Public Works are on the front lines but all employees have a critical role in becoming educated and being watchful and aware.

Torrance Origins

The History Behind the Acquisition & Naming of City Facilities

"Victor E. Benstead Plunge"

By Michael George

The Victor E. Benstead Plunge is one of the oldest municipal recreation facilities in the city. For over 57 years Torrites have enjoyed learning to swim, aquacades, pool parties and cooling off at the Plunge.

The Plunge is the only city building that was named after a sitting councilman. Modestly, Victor E. Benstead abstained from the voting. Mr. Benstead served on the City Council between 1952 and 1964. Before that, he was a member of the Civil Service Commission. Mr. Benstead was an old time Torrance oilman and steelworker, both booming trades in the early history of the city.



Victor E. Benstead

In 1950, Mr. Benstead was part of the "reform" movement along with a sharp young lawyer by the name of Albert Isen. Mr. Benstead lost out on a 1950 council seat by only seven votes, leading his attorney, one Albert Isen, to contest the election in court. In 1952 Mr. Benstead, was elected to his first term as part of the Torrance "BID for better government" ticket (Benstead, Isen, Drale). It was Drale in 1956 who moved that the Plunge "be named the Benstead Municipal Plunge in honor of Mr. Benstead's service to the city". Mayor Isen amended the motion to the name we all know.



Save the Date!

Employee Health & Benefits Fair

Wednesday, October 2, 2013,
11am to 2pm at the Cultural Arts Center.

Retirees - July 1, 2013 to Sept 1, 2013

Name	Title	Retirement Date	Years of Service
Zachary Bazilius	Police Officer	5/4/2013	11 years
Irene Blyleven	Building Permit Technician	5/23/2013	20 years
Patrick Hennessy	Police Services Officer	6/14/2013	32 years
Kevin Kreager	Police Captain	3/28/2013	30 years
Phillip Ramirez	Building Maintainer	5/30/2013	27 years
Freda Toney	Bus Operator	5/2/2013	9 years
James Wallace	Police Officer	6/28/2013	25 years
Jill Weldin	Senior Account Clerk	5/24/2013	16 years
Michael Wilmoth	Police Sergeant	5/28/2013	27 years

Promotions - July 1, 2013 to Sept 1, 2013

Community Development	General Services	Fire
Philip Bradshaw Environmental Quality Officer	Jimmy Fuentes Air Conditioning/Heating/ Electrical Supervisor	Patrick Jacobson Fire Fighter
Anna Fernandez Planning Assistant	Public Works	Police
	Craig Bilezerian Deputy Public Works Director/City Engineer	Paul Solorzano Police Sergeant
Cyndy Rosell Senior Administrative Assistant		James Titiriga Police Lieutenant

New Hires - July 1, 2013 to Sept 1, 2013

City Attorney's Office	Finance	Public Works
Jeanne-Marie Litvin Deputy City Attorney	Robert Fujioki Kimberly Park Accountant	Francisco Jara-Martinez Jesse Villarreal Maintenance Worker
City Manager's Office	Fire	Transit
Jeffrey Neu Staff Assistant	Patrick Jacobson Fire Fighter	Israel Amezcua Senior Mechanic
Community Development	General Services	
Ernesto Martinez Jr. Permit Technician I	Joseph Bustamante Steven Ihori Senior Mechanic	Armando Alvarez Avila Eddie Bean Amy Calderon Roberto Castrellon William Escalante Daivon Harris Michael Parsons Neishay Springfield Gary Stafford Relief Bus Operator
Wendy Menendez Permit Technician II	Christian Smith Custodian	
Leo Oorts Environmental Quality Officer	Police	
	Christina Bazzo Forensic ID Specialist	
Louis Ortega Sr. Mechanical & Plumbing Inspector	Christina Gurrola Clyde Kempf Mark Kickbusch James Kyle III Sean Mizokami Brendan Thebeau Police Officer	
Christopher Travers Environmental Quality Officer	Erika Havrilchak Services Officer	



BRING IT HOME

Guys, when it comes to your health, be a team player!

Whether you're a single man or a busy dad, you play an important part in the lives of those around you. So take care of the basics to stay on top of your game.

Preventive screenings, like annual eye exams, can reveal health issues before they become big problems. Make small changes to your eating, exercise and sleep habits to improve fitness and overall well-being. And if you have a concern, even one that seems minor, don't just walk it off. Learn to deal with stress by reaching out.

By getting into the swing of living healthy, it all becomes second nature; which is good because your personal well-being should fit you like a glove.

GATHER ROUND

Here are more ways to help you run the bases:

Hop on pop. Ask about your family's medical history to get an idea of the illnesses or conditions you might face.

Mind your spirit. Tending to your mental and emotional health is just as important to your well-being as diet and exercise.

Because you're #1. Consider getting screened for prostate cancer, the second leading cause of cancer deaths among American men.

Courtesy of Kaiser Permanente Visit kp.org/menshealth for some more good stuff.

Behind the Scenes at the Cultural Arts Center

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It takes a team of talented and experienced people to handle the 140 classes that are currently provided to the community at the Center. "Our most popular classes are the children's ballet and tap, youth Hip Hop and adult exercise and dance," said Randi Maddox, Program Coordinator. Noon-time exercise classes are scheduled with City employees in mind, Monday through Thursday including the popular Zumba dance class.



Supervisor, Janene Ferguson, plans 58 different types of art classes taught by 23 teachers and the Early Childhood program with 12 "phenomenal" teachers, held at 3 sites during the school year and at one site during the summer. She also serves on the Torrance Arts Council Board and oversees volunteer and educational programs for the Art Museum. "I have such a neat job," said Ferguson, "The arts can provide such joy."



Anita Moisen is Booking Manager for the Armstrong Theater which opened in October of 1991. She started a volunteer program at the theater that boasts 200 on the roster with about 100 active volunteers who help in the front of the house at the shows and events at the theater. The theater is booked about 300 days of

the year for a wide variety of events and shows including weddings, memorial services, graduations, City events, public school concerts, lectures, concerts, musicals, plays, and dance and music recitals.

Jordan Rumery is Technical Director at the Armstrong and supervises a part-time staff of 15. "The staff is well trained and good at rolling with the changes," said Rumery. "They are cross trained on much of the equipment so that everyone is able to pitch in and help to develop great performances." Five crew members are the minimum for any given production; audio tech, lighting tech, fly-rail/deck, house manager, stage manager with more added as needed.



Cultural Services Team – (Front row) Joyce Bell, Eve Rappoport, Nida Murakawa, Michelle Cho, Janene Ferguson. (Back row) Regina Taylor, Debbie Collins, Lisa DeSmidt, Randi Maddox

Cultural Services Senior Supervisor, Joyce Bell, oversees the operations of all the Cultural Services programs. In addition to keeping an eye on trends for program development, Bell handles budgets, billings, profit and loss statements, purchase orders and subsidy plans. She is responsible for directly implementing and managing the paperwork for 12 contractors and comparable rates surveys. Joyce is also the Liaison for four charter clubs that meet at the center, Aikido, Fencing, Kendo and Naginata as well as the citywide safety team for the division.



(Front Row) Johnathan Mascorro, Joyce Bell, Charles Trammell (Back row) Travis Corzine and Sameer Baig welcome citizens at the recent Cultural Arts Center Open House.

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Behind the Scenes at the Cultural Arts Center

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Gia Inferred is the energetic Performing Arts Coordinator in charge of the Torrance Theater Company, the summer musical at the Armstrong and summer youth theater camps. She supervises the Torrance Civic Chorale, coordinates various local groups performances and, liaison to producers of Shakespeare by the Sea, for two Wilson park shows. The Torrance Theater Company produces a season of five shows at its Cabrillo Avenue location in Downtown Torrance. The season starts in September and costs a mere \$100 for all five shows.



Civic Center about 1967; Construction on the courthouse is nearly complete but the parking lot has yet to be started, looks like the rest are dirt or blacktop. The Victor Benstead Plunge, Ken Miller Recreation Center and the Joslyn Center (now the Torrance Art Museum) are all there in the upper section of the photo. The area highlighted in red is where the Cultural Arts Center stands today.

Torrance Trivia

Spring 2013 Issue Question:

On December 15, 1966, City Attorney Stanley Remelmeyer, declared that Torrance was a "complete urban environment". What momentous event led to the city attorney's announcement?

- A. Torrance population exceeds 140,000
- B. Milton Kaufman, the home builder, buys up the last large tract of land in the city
- C. The last cow leaves town
- D. The "Marriage of the Malls" makes the largest indoor retail center in the nation.
- E. The last farm is plowed over for the Whitefront parking lot

Answer – C!

Correct Responders: We got a lot of good guesses but here are the three people that got it right on the first try - Bill Kamimura, Laurie Anderson, Daniel Redman – and the winner of the gift certificate is: Daniel Redman! Please contact Myisha Phillips in HR to claim your prize.

New Question:

In the early 1960's these relics of a bygone era came crashing down. Once dotting the city, these structures defined the "Modern Industrial City" from the 1920s through the 1960s. Little missed today, the structure meant progress and helped spur the development of the city through the depression. What were these iconic Torrance Structures?

Thanks to Michael George for these Trivia Questions and Answers.

Email your answer to JanetStancliff3@gmail.com put "Torrance Trivia" in the subject line.